

## **AGENDA**

### **Bar Harbor Cruise Ship Task Force**

**Thursday October 23, 2008**

**8:30 AM**

**Council Chambers**

**Municipal Building**

**93 Cottage Street**

#### **I. Call to Order 8:36 AM**

*Members present were Chairman Paul Paradis, Vice Chairman Chris Fogg, Secretary Anne Krieg, Police Chief Nate Young, Amy Powers, Fred Cook, George Seavey, and Greg Gordon*

#### **II. Excused Absences**

*Cook moved, with a second from Fogg to excuse Phippen, Opdyke and Bahr from the meeting. All were in favor of the motions.*

#### **III. Minutes**

*A. June 12, 2008 were approved with editions from the Chair by a motion from Young and a second from Cook.*

*B. July 10, 2008 were approved with editions from the Chair by a motion from Young and a second from Cook.*

*C. August 14, 2008 minutes are pending from staff.*

*D. September 11, 2008 minutes are pending from staff.*

*IV. Adoption of agenda was approved by a motion from Fogg and a second from Young.*

#### **V. Staff Reports**

**A. Anne Krieg, Nate Young and Greg Gordon – Reports on September 18<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup> downtown drop off tests.**

The October test did not occur.

September 18<sup>th</sup> test was reviewed. Gordon went over his observation. One ship was American, the other was German. German passengers were nervous about getting off. Concerns expressed included the buses blocking stores. He noted the area needs to be staffed. He indicated it was hard for the buses to loop around to show passengers where they are and how to get back, given buses often do a loop to show people where to go. He questioned if the top of Agamont a better location.

Krieg indicated that multiple languages on a map are necessary if the foreign visitor market is growing. She also observed the operation proves that police staffing is necessary to make this work.

Young agreed with Krieg, noting the officer also has to monitor intersection traffic for Mount Desert and Main Streets. He also feels this is the best location for a second stop in downtown. He reminded the task force that the public safety space and location needs study is planned as a future project. This project includes a transportation element.

Fogg agreed that Chamber staff is necessary as well as policing. He noted he has heard from businesses that are happy with the change. He did note that since many folks head towards Main Street, passengers need to be guided in both directions by staff.

Cook questioned when we do a signage project. He also questioned if temporary signage could occur until fiscal year 2010 (beginning July 2009). He also noted the coordination of what languages are necessary needs to be coordinated.

Paradis explained the fiscal year and staff explained spending requirements.

Seavey noted it okay to not be ready until September since that is the bulk of our visitation.

Gordon noted there are 9 ships in the summer. They are mostly American vessels; however German and multi-language vessels are increasing their visits.

Cook noted that universal signs would help communication.

Gordon opined that a colored line like the Freedom Trail might be helpful for the visitor. We could note a specified loop, outline the business district, and/or provide directions to the pier.

Paradis noted that 20 letters have been sent to Council sending positive messages on the test. He also said that Tom Crikelair had indicated the lot area in front of Villager Motel as another possible location for a stop.

Discussion ensued about whether this is feasible with motor coach tours. If tours start at Suer du Mont in the future, this might work. Some tours are getting shortened (Holland America – for fuel/cost savings – 8 to 3 Maasdaam is 8 to 5); instead of a 2 ½ hours, the tour operators are trying 2 ¼, not stopping at Thunder Hole.

Paradis questioned if we make the stop permanent, how do we communicate with the Police Department.

Gordon answered this would have to be coordinated. It is still tentative in terms of tour changes and should be reviewed further.

It was noted that not all tours go into Acadia National Park.

It was further noted that flexibility is key. Field changes may need to be accommodated and the police need arrival and departure times.

## **VI. Regular Business**

### **A. Continue discussion with Ocean Properties on future plans for West Street and service to Cruise Ship tenders and passengers.**

No one from Ocean Properties was present.

Group discussed congestion issues when Harbor Place's floats were not operational. It was an issue for traffic control.

### **B. Discussion and possible action on how to proceed with a downtown drop-off**

#### **i. Signage and Equipment needs**

#### **ii. Personnel requirements**

Young noted that map and signage costs should go into the FY 10 budget. Personnel will be proposed to be added for next fiscal year. It was questioned if we can still go forward without full funding, and it was noted we will work more efficiently when funded and implemented.

Chamber can staff it now and under the next fiscal year budget as may be approved and modified.

*Young moved to request Council to direct staff to submit a budget for signage, equipment, and personnel to facilitate the downtown drop off. Cook seconded the motion.*

The proprietor of Sea of Cotton was allowed to speak. She thanked group for their work, noting that she is moving her business next year. The edge of town really needs this attention, noting that very walk by potential customer is great. She opined that the town has to be careful not to direct folks to Main Street and back to the pier immediately upon disembarking at the drop off. She wondered if passengers could be dropped off in the middle of the street and not at its ends. She also noted that perhaps merchants might be a financial partner in the map creation.

The Man Store indicated they would use staff to give directions to people.

Paradis noted that the Chamber of Commerce is the manager of providing directions to visitors. There may be an opportunity to volunteer through their organization. Since there is no soliciting on sidewalk this would have to work with the Chamber of Commerce and the Town.

Fogg offered the idea of a booth located at the drop off point. He noted this is a crowded spot and can be claustrophobic when people get off the bus.

Powers asked Krieg about meeting in Portland. Krieg noted she was meeting development district and it was not directly related to cruise ship operations.

*All were in favor of the motion.*

*Young moved to recommend that the Council allow a downtown drop off with a flexible location to accommodate changes in traffic patterns and, tour routes and timing. The operation of this includes the Police Department to work with the cruise ship industry and the Chamber Seavey seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion.*

*Krieg moved that this would be implemented in the calendar 2009 season, seconded by Cook. All were in favor of the motion.*

**C. Taxi Tours on the Pier**

**i. Amy Powers – Report on how Taxi Tours are handled in other Ports**

Powers noted she had 2 responses. These responses were forwarded to task force members. She noted they were licensed and space was allowed for a queuing.

Gordon has non-local folks doing tours in Portland and this has been an issue, as well as operators not following rules on charges/rates. He recommended that the Town needs a licensing program.

The Ambassadorship program in New Brunswick was noted as effective training for tour professionals.

Young noted that there is fighting amongst taxi drivers. He noted there is intimidation of passengers in other ports he has observed.

Young reviewed the current system, noting that fees are not regulated as well as the cruising and parking rules. We provide a space for a taxi but it's actually a tour operator in the space. The language includes that the operator must be able to provide the service to the town.

Fogg questioned if can we regulate that, if this is a private market of supply and demand.

A rule that if taxi is providing a tour and you are in the taxi space, you have to provide that service at the taxi rate, not the tour rate as an option for regulation.

Powers said the industry gives taxi info to passengers showing an agreed upon rate.

Young said that we are providing public space for private tours under the taxi license – other tours cannot do that, e.g. Olli's Trolley which lays the issue of fairness. He said the rules are being pushed now with standing there and signage on the car.

Krieg reviewed the relevant elements of the destination management plan. She questioned if move them around the corner as in the plan, will more solicitation occur. She also questioned if the tour and taxi uses should be separated.

Rent a car issues and needs for rides to airport were also noted.

Powers noted one system had a system for queuing up and they have Marshall. The customer goes to this person and they call for the service.

It was noted that 10% of the taxi tours are pre booked.

Fogg said we should have this discussion with the taxi industry present at the meeting. Young agreed and said details need to be worked out

Seavey noted the costs of personnel addition and difficulties in managing queuing in that space.

Powers questioned if we needed a sub committee, or to survey the companies.

Paradis noted what was in the plan on this issue.

Cook felt if there was an emergency situation; it could be a difficult congestion issue.

Seavey noted there are spots dedicated for emergency vehicles, customs & immigration, homeland security, and police vehicles. He also opined that there should be more security there in terms of allowing any vehicle in the area.

Young repeated that there may be a fairness issue for Acadia Tours for example. We control private bus tours but taxi tours get a better deal by having better located spaces to direct passengers.

Paradis stated this should be tabled to the next meeting.

Powers noted this is a bigger issue and could consume a meeting. Many companies are down on the pier taking advantage of the situation.

***Seavey moved to table to a future meeting. Krieg seconded. All were in favor of the motion.***

(Young left the meeting to attend another meeting.)

- ii. **Charlie Phippen – Report on how Taxi Tours are handled in Newport, RI. – item tabled**
- iii. **Discussion and possible action on recommendations for handling Taxi Tours. tabled**
  - 1. **Location and number of spaces**
  - 2. **Scheme for assigning spaces**

**D. Meeting Schedule for fall and winter months.**

*Fogg moved with a second from Seavey to approve the following meeting schedule:*

*November 6, 2008*

*November 13, 2008*

*December 11, 2008*

*December 18, 2008*

*January 8, 2009*

*January 22, 2009*

*February 5, 2009*

*February 26, 2009*

*March 6, 2009*

*March 12, 2009*

*April 2, 2009*

*April 16, 2009*

*All were in favor of the motion.*

**E. Review of Priorities items left to address**

Taxi cabs will be on next agenda with a notification for November 6<sup>th</sup>.

**F. Walking Map**

- i. Report from walking map sub-committee - tabled**

**VII. Public Comment**

There was none.

**VIII. Items for next agenda**

Items as noted herein.

Signage was discussed to direct people better.

Powers expressed concern that the July 4<sup>th</sup> ship for 2010 was canceled by the Town Manager to the Harbormaster. Discussion ensued as to what action was taken by the Task Force. No action was taken as per Krieg and Seavey.

November 13<sup>th</sup> will the meeting to discuss July 4<sup>th</sup> allowance of ship for review of previous action and possible recommendation for future as per the Chair.

Gordon also added that when situations changed, that there is notification to the task force and the industry.

Powers offered that in the second week in November there is a meeting with Homeland Security and other parties to de-brief on the season. She was wondering if there would be a Bar Harbor representative at this meeting.

**IX. Set next meeting time, date and place**

**A. 8:30am, November 6, 2008.**

Cook will not be at this meeting for medical reasons.

**X. Adjournment 10:36 AM**

*These minutes were prepared by Anne Krieg, Secretary to the Cruise Ship Task Force for task force review at their meeting November 6, 2008.*